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ABSTRACT

This book digs into the tensions, contradictions, and uncertainties of teaching. The book explores how to "read" teaching, which involves the application to practice and research of "simple if neglected things" like noticing, wondering, reflecting, and holding an impression in the grip of an idea. The first chapter discusses the productive uncertainties in teaching which must be acknowledged despite efforts of school improvement entrepreneurs, teacher educators, and researchers to present teaching as much simpler than it is. The book notes the importance of stepping "outside" the classroom to search for perspective on the events inside, and presents excerpts from a journal recording the author's experiences and struggles in his 15th year of teaching. Stories and conversations about teachers' self-discovery and political awakening are presented, based on a Secondary Study Group, which met regularly to talk about teaching and to share their reactions to reading about teaching. A story of policy-making by teachers is then chronicled, as a high school joins the Coalition of Essential Schools and struggles to reform itself "from the bottom up." The book ends with a chapter about heroic educators who have written about their own lives as teachers, including Margaret Haley, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, and Eliot Wigginton. (Contains approximately 110 references.) (JDD)

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